Breaking the Boundaries: Women's Encounter with the State in Sweden

Women's encounters with the state in Sweden, Germany and United States during the post-war period

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Lilja Mósesdóttir

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Preface

Lilja Mósesdóttir visited the Feminist Research Centre in Aalborg (FREIA) in the spring and summer of 1996 where she discussed her research project Breaking the Boundaries: Women's encounter with the state in Sweden, Germany and the United States during the post-war period as well as common research interests in developing a gender sensitive framework for comparative studies of welfare regimes focusing on the interrelation between state, market and civil society with members of FREIA.

Lilja Mósesdóttir's research project Breaking the Boundaries: Women's encounter with the state in Sweden, Germany and the United States during the post-war period makes an original contribution to the feminist scholarship on gender and welfare regimes. It presents an interesting approach within the themes of FREIA's research programme *Gender Relations, Power, Knowledge and Social Change*, and FREIA is happy to be able to publish Lilja Mósesdóttir's paper in our paper series.

Ruth Emerek and Birte Siim

Abstract

The social blocks governing in Sweden, Germany and the United States during the post war period will be explored in this paper. The analysis will go beyond emphasis on the aggregate product of individual preferences and focus on social blocks involving alliances, compromises and patterns of domination among social groups in the three countries. Women's integration into established pressure groups, organised interest groups and political parties and the institutional arrangements and norms affecting political representation in these three countries will be examined. Hence, the importance of social forces in understanding the development of welfare states on the one hand and the state as a producer of strategies and a product of strategies on the other hand is recognised. The social blocks have become more unstable since the early 1970s due to economic and social changes contesting the very foundations of the welfare state on the one hand and to new challenges and shifts in the balance of power giving rise to new welfare demands on the other hand. The transformation of gender relations apparent in the renewed rise of the women's movements and in the 'gender-gap' will be studied in view of women's greater labour force participation, changes in the family relations, growing contradictions and expansion/retrenchment of the welfare state in the three countries.

Introduction

Compared with other North-American and Western European countries, Swedish women appear to be the most successful in closing the gender gap in the labour market and as concerns political representation. American women, on the contrary seem to have been the least successful in gaining political representation and social provisions enabling them to combine the role of a working mother. In Germany, the picture is more puzzling with a group of women advocating greater recognition of their unpaid work and another group struggling to enter the 'male-privileged' labour market. If we are to understand the forces shaping gender relations, it is necessary to break the boundaries created by the sharp division of work between economics, sociology and political science. In this paper, an interdisciplinary framework will be used to analyse the impact of social blocks and institutional arrangements in Sweden, Germany and the United States on gender relations during the post-war period. The institutional arrangements refer to the form of the state and the policy

formation and implementation process. The focus will be on women's integration into established pressure groups, organised interest groups and political parties and the institutional arrangements and norms affecting political representation in these countries. Moreover, a historical approach will be applied as social relations such as gender relations are a process shaped by the outcomes of past as well as present conflicts and institutional arrangements.

The analysis will start with a discussion of Regulation theories and then include a summary of the development of social blocks during the post-war period in the selected countries. Women's integration into the social blocks prevailing during the post-war period or until the 1970s will be studied in the second part. In the third part, institutional factors at the level of the state affecting women's position and political struggle will be examined. Finally, the new challenges and the shift in the balance of power will be studied in view of growing contradictions and expansion/retrenchment of the welfare state in Sweden, Germany and the United States.

1. Regulation of Social Relations

Regulationist theories can be used to analyse social blocks as they give a framework to examine the shifting relationship between systems of production, reproduction and social blocks on the one hand and its regulation on the other hand. The Regulation school has developed as a reaction to the omission within Marxism and the Neo-classical school of the role of other mechanism than the value form and prices in ensuring a relative stabilisation of capitalism and market economies (Jessop 1995:316). Regulation refers to various modes by which activities within an economy and inter-actor relations are co-ordinated. During the 1980s, many Regulation theorists shifted their analytical focus from the regulation mechanism to new developments in the system of production and employment. This shift in focus by the Regulation school has been criticised for economic and technological determinism. For example, Tickell and Peck point out that the Regulationists' analyses of flexible production, flexible labour systems, and new industrial spaces have been very silent about the political and social institutions needed to maintain this economic development (1995:365). Regini (1995) has reacted to this deficiency by linking together changes in the organisation of production and

work and changes in forms of regulation at the macro level that occurred in Europe during the 1980[i].

According to Regini, the various modes or forms of regulation are the state, market, 'communitarian' regulation (family, subcultures and social movements) and 'associational' regulation. How these forms combine varies between countries and changes overtime. Changes are often only marginal leading to small continuous adjustments (1995:5). However, a new form of regulation or the 'micro-social' regulation occurred during the 1980s in most of the European economies replacing to a certain extent the 'macro-political' regulation. The boundaries between the two forms of regulation are not yet certain. At the 'macro-political' level of regulation, the state and large interest organizations engage in allocation of resources in order to counteract the socially undesirable outcomes of the market mechanism (1995:viii). At the 'micro-social' level of regulation, the site moves from that of the state to the level of the firm (in most cases) and initiatives are predominately taken by social actors such as associations, trade unions and management as compared with political actors (1995:128). Regini's analysis is reductionist as it focuses mainly on the changes in the regulation of capital-labour relations at the level of the state and the firm. More attention needs to be given to the regulation of other social relations such as gender relations at the level of, e.g. social movements who have become more important during the 1970s and 1980s in order to understand the nature of the changes taken place within political and social institutions such as the welfare state as well as in organisation of work in the sphere of production and reproduction. Moreover, the fragmentation of various political alliances and the shift in the balance of power do not necessarily mean that initiatives are no longer made by the political actors, as it is not yet clear what this development will lead to. Although many have criticised Regulationists for not giving enough attention to the regulation of other social relations than that of capital-labour, very few have attempted to expand the Regulationist theories to include, e.g. gender relations and social movements. The few exceptions include Jenson (1990) and Williams (1994) who have used the Regulationist framework to study how social movements have challenged and become embedded in the development of political and social institutions of the state (see also Mósesdóttir 1995).

In her analysis, Jenson (1990) attributes the failure of first-wave feminists' struggle in Canada to the timing of women's entry into the electoral institutions. At the time of women's entry, the political system was no longer

open to the recognition of new actors and interests as it was a time of consolidation of the already firmly established institutions. Hence, Jenson claims that at certain moments the political discourse is in turmoil creating space for alternatives and at other moments '...the systems of social relations crystallise, stalling contradictions at least for a time' (1990:19). Williams (1994) on the other hand criticises the Regulationists for studying new challenges such as social movements only in terms of changes in class relations involving agency without power. Hence, Williams maintains that Regulationists' analyses of the welfare state are inadequate as social relations in this area are not only of class but of gender and race. According to Williams, analyses of social movements should be sensitive to their histories and consider the social relations from which they emerged and which they seek to challenge (1994:66-67). In my study of the women's movement, I have analysed how the women's movement has sought to influence the way the state regulates gender relations on the one hand and how the state has regulated gender relations in the spheres of production and social reproduction across different countries (see Mósesdóttir 1995). While Jenson only concentrates on the struggle of the Canadian first-wave feminists during the consolidation period, my focus is restricted to the second-wave feminist struggle during the breake up of that period. Williams discussion also centres on more recent developments as it is confined to the role of social movements within welfare at the time of restructuring. Moreover, struggles and co-operation within and between social movements are missing in Williams' analyses.

Studies of social movements have led to important improvements in the theoretical framework of the Regulation school. However, more theoretical and empirical analyses are needed of the complex forms of collective identity, action, alliances, compromises and patterns of domination among social groups and of their historical development. Such analysis will enhance our understanding of the nature of the changes which have taken place within political and social institutions as well as in organisation of work in the sphere of production and reproduction. Moreover, greater attention should be given to individuals in relation to social movements and social blocks. Folbre (1994) has developed valuable insights into social relations at the level of the individual in her approach to the study of collective identities, interests and action. According to Folbre, identities and interests that specify the context of individual choice are defined by assets, rules, norms and preferences. The mechanisms of group identity and interest shape and are shaped by social

institutions which on the other side systematically strengthen certain groups and weaken others (1994:48). However, the interrelationship between various groups or agencies involving both co-operation and conflict as well as alliances and domination needs more elaboration in Folbre's discussion. The analysis in this paper uses insights from analysis of social movements by the Regulation school as well as from empirical studies of the historical development of social blocks in Sweden, Germany and the United States. Before proceeding to the conditions in the selected countries, I will discuss the historical development of social blocks in more analytical terms.

a) Interests and collective action

My analytical focus will first be on the level of individual, then move on to collective action that involves groups and finally broaden out to include structure or the institutional context that shape and are shaped by individuals who exert influence (agent) and collective action or agency. Individuals have a variety of interests or perceive themselves as belonging to a variety of groups organised around, e.g. class, religion and race that may represent conflicting interests (Folbre 1994:5). Those individuals in similar situation may even designate themselves to different groups. The choice of group(s) will be influenced by how the individual perceives his/her position and how his/her situation is perceived by others. An individual may join a group(s) in order to make new claims and/or support old claims or simply to reap the benefits involved, i.e. to be a free-rider and/or to fight subordination. When the individual makes a choice, he/she will not be able to predict the benefits of various memberships to her/himself and society at large since the actions of others are unknown (Folbre 1994:5) and actions may have unintended effects.

Societal changes (economic, social and/or political) leading to growing contradictions between individuals/groups/countries will induce new collective action that is in most cases a collective attempt outside established institutions to promote a common interest. Although the activities of the new collective action or social movements may be outside the establishment, they may promote their interest through formal channels (see Giddens 1993:642). The type of collective action will be the result of strategic calculations and is constrained by access to resources, other social blocks (domination and alliances) and social and political institutions (norms and rules). The strategic calculations are a continuous process of past actions that have both intented and unintended effects (see Regini 1995:35; Mósesdóttir 1995). Moreover, societal changes may also disrupt collective action. Social movements may

either aim to bring about society change and/or the behaviour of people (see Giddens 1993:643). Alliances, compromises and patterns of domination within and among social groups are the result of individual and group dynamics, i.e. who has the right to make claims, choices and constraints faced by groups as well as co-operation and conflicts between groups (see Jenson 1990:18). Moreover, co-operation and conflicts between groups will be complicated by the multiple group identity of their members (Folbre 1994:82). After a stable system of social blocks has been built, it will only recognise new groups and social contexts or agency when the system can no longer by reproduced or regulated due to societal changes (see Jenson 1990:19).

The discussion will now become more empirically oriented as it is concerned with relations between agency and structures or regulation of gender relations by political parties, interest groups, especially, the unions, and the state and then by social movements acting at the state level. Other levels of regulation such as the family and the labour market will only be considered indirectly or when changes at these levels affect regulation at state level. The collective identities of actors are constituted at these various levels through a conflict between various competing identities. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that social blocks at the political level became more open for social identities other than class, religion, regionalism and nationalism. Hence, the female suffrage did not enable women in most West Europe and North American countries to exercise any dramatic impact on the political and policy processes. Women and the women's movements were induced to join other actors such as church groups as well as women's organisations within political parties and unions. Separate women's movement in politics that had in many instances struggled for female suffrage could therefore not be sustained during the early part of the post-war period. In many countries, the women's movement became a maternal and social reform movement concentrating on activities related to women's role as mothers and domestic workers. Hence, women's identity was linked to other social relations in a variety of ways. However, their gender identity still remained important (see Jenson 1990). Although women belonged to various groups, they were in most instances regarded as a homogenous group of citizens. The traditional division of work gave women this homogenous outlook. Most women were constrained to the sphere of reproduction. Women's engagement in the sphere of production was limited and discontinuous confined to periods of lighter domestic activities. Men on the other hand were constrained to the sphere of production and assumed to be breadwinners. When men entered political process, their status

was more heterogeneous as divisions along class, religion and regions were acknowledged as legitimate.

b) Women and social blocks

Swedish, German and American women entered the electoral systems from 1919 to 1921 that no longer recognised new social groups. Hence, the suffragette movements and/or women's groups were forced to disintegrate and/or become depoliticised. This may explain why women in these three countries did not use their right to vote to the same extent as men until the 1970s. Swedish women joined the political parties by entering separate women's organisations. The main governmental party since the 1932, the Social Democratic Party SAP (Socialdemokratiska Arbetarpartiet) pursued several cross-class alliances simultaneously involving farmers, domestic workers and workers in the export sector. Moreover, the class compromise established in 1938 between the blue collar labour unions and capital did not create opportunity to transfer gender relations. Hence, women's maternal role was emphasised and supported by family-oriented social polices. The Swedish People's Home (Folkets Hem) consisted therefore of mothers/housewives, workers and farmers[ii]. The Allies distributed the political power among variety of institutions and elites in West Germany and built a rigid system of representation. The dominant political party until the late 1960s was the Christian Democratic Party CDU (Die Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands) that has had a warm relationship with capital and the Catholic church as well as with its junior coalition partner, the Free Democratic party FDP (Die Freie Demokratische Partei). The major interest groups in West Germany have been those of employers, labour, agriculture, the churches and professional organisations that work closely with the political parties and the state (Conradt 1993:243). After the war, German women organised within, outside and across the political parties and the trade unions. The ruling of the Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) in 1949 concerning the Equal Rights Clause strengthened the housewife-marriage. Moreover, the lack of support from the political parties and the unions for women's paid employment enforced the male breadwinner model in which women were identified as wives. The collective identity of American women was already formed, when they achieved the national suffrage in 1920. The unions had supported the maternal role of women by demanding protective legislation and the Supreme Court granted special protective legislation for women based on the notion that there were differences between women and men due to women's reproductive role. Moreover, the mothers' pension laid the ground for

treating women as mothers rather than workers in welfare policies. The alliance between the Southern agricultural interests in the Democratic Party and the business-oriented Republicans was the dominant social block in the United States until the 1960s. The alliance reinforced women's maternal role by blocking all welfare reforms from the 1940s to the 1960s.

c) Institutional arrangements

The form of the state and the policy formation and implementation process are institutional arrangements affecting women's position and political struggle in Sweden, Germany and the United States (see also table 1). The centralised Swedish state has enabled women to concentrate on one level of government when fighting subordination. The federal states in Germany and the United States on the contrary, have various levels of governments forcing women to scatter their efforts such that women's struggle has been weakened. Laws and rules of procedure for state bureaucracies are unified in both Sweden and Germany ensuring that a policy formulated at the national level will be implemented in a unified manner. However, the social policy administration in Germany is fragmented that has in many cases enable to secure financial support for alternative arrangements in the provision of social services. In the United States, the states do not have unified laws in all areas and federal regulation allows some flexibility when introduced at the state level. The conditions of women in employment and on welfare differ therefore much more within the United States than within Sweden and Germany. Factors contributing to women's homogeneity first as mothers and then as working mothers in Sweden are the centralisation of the state and the highly institutionalised policy formation within which the LO has had a strong position due to its close ties with the SAP. In addition, the possibility of forming a minority government has enabled the SAP to stay in power during most of the post-war period. German women on the contrary have found it difficult to press through policy reforms that could modify the contradictions women face when trying to combine the role of wife and mother with a career due to the consensus policy formation and the fragmented social policy administration as well as the effective necessity to form a coalition government. The choice many German women are therefore forced to make is between being a housewife or to have a childless career. American women on the other hand are divided across class, ethnic/racial and family lines as public policies reinforce regional differences and labour market differentiation. The decentralised (federalism) and divided government (Congress versus the presidency) has fragmented the organisational structure of the two main parties The fragmented political parties and the complex policy formation and implementation process in the United States have prevented any major changes in the contradictions most women face when trying to combine the role of wife and mother with a career. The German Constitutional Court and the American Supreme Court are another dimension of the federal structure that has had implications for women's struggle for equal rights and abortion. In the United States, the Supreme Court has ensured legalisation of abortion

within the first three months while the Constitutional Court in Germany has rejected all governmental acts allowing abortion with the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Table 1. Institutional arrangements affecting women's political struggle

	Sweden	**Germany**	**United States**
State:			
structure	unitary	federal	federal
government	minority	coalition	divided
Policies:			
formation	institutional	consensus	bargaining
implementation	unified	unified*	flexibility

*The administration of social policy is fragmented

d) The disintegration of social blocks

The social blocks established during and after the Swedish, German and American women entered the electoral institutions started to disintegrate in the 1960s. Contributing to the disintegration was greater access of groups located outside the boundaries of dominant social blocks to resources (paid work and/or public benefits and services as, e.g. education) that enabled them to mobilise politically. Moreover, contradictions within and between social blocks were growing due to the decline of the mass-production system and enhanced internationalisation and then globalization of capital and communities (mass-media). Hence, the balance of power started to shift and space was created for alternative movements, new alliances, compromises and system of domination within and among social groups. Social movements organising around race/ethnicity, gender and generational divisions are the new challenges breaking the boundaries of governing social blocks formed around class, religion, regionalism and nationalism that became engraved in the norms and the institutional structure of the state during the early part of the welfare state's development. In Sweden, Germany and the United States, the balance of power has in most cases shifted away from labour to capital due to structural changes, greater internationalisation and anti-labour policies. However, it is not yet clear how stable this shift is as labour may manage to mobilise new labour groups (women) and adapt its activities to a more diverse labour market. Moreover, the new challenges have fragmented the parliamentary party system, first on left and then on the right. The fragmentation has weakened the balance of power at the parliamentary level making compromises and consensus more difficult to achieve.

In Sweden, the class compromise started to disintegrate in the 1970s that can be contributed to structural changes, growing internal divisions among labour, a shift in the balance of power towards capital, and to the fragmentation of the parliamentary party system. The balance of power shifted towards capital due to the ineffective wage-earner funds, breakdown of centralised collective bargaining and greater internationalisation of Swedish capital. The West German 'consensus' model has come under growing pressure in the 1980s and especially in the 1990s as a result of fragmentation of the parliamentary party system and growing tensions between capital and labour. Moreover, unification has both enhanced social divisions and created conditions for changes that are no longer incremental as access to social insurance programmes has been extended and federal centralisation has increased. The two main parties in American politics changed during the 1980s and 1990s.

The Republican party managed to build a new coalition by 1980 consisting of a regional, religious and business components that appealed to the middle class. The Republicans' anti-labour policies, tax cuts for the rich and cuts in welfare programmes for the poor lead to growing polarisation of the American Society during the 1980s contributing to the success of the Democrats in appealing to the old New Deal coalition consisting of workers, minorities, women and many middle class voters.

e) Women's political participation

Women's groups and other social groups in Sweden demanded greater equality of outcome in terms of both class and gender in the 1960s. The SAP responded to these demands by integrating equality program that had something for everybody. Swedish women were integrated into the labour market as working mothers by extensive provision of social services. Moreover, equality in the labour market was to be achieved through collective agreements or wage solidarity. In Germany, the family was strengthened until the late 1960s inducing more and more women to become housewives. However, women's aspirations had changed by the 1970s and fewer women wanted to be 'just' housewives. The 'new' women's movement started in the early 1970s involving women organising outside the established political system in 'autonomous' groups as well as women working inside the established organisations as, e.g. the church, unions and political parties. The 'autonomous' groups worked from time to time together with women inside the system in order to pursue certain issues. The women's movement in the United States was influenced by the demands of the civil rights movement and a group of women started to mobilise around equal rights ideology. The new social movements protested against the racial and gender divisions on which the New Deal social programmes were based. The Democratic party responded with the Great Society programmes benefiting both the white and black poor. During the 1960s and 1970s, American women were slowly integrated into the labour market as individuals, i.e. without any major increase in social services. Moreover, women advocating equality and nondiscrimination were successful in promoting women's individual rights at the federal level between 1966 and 1976 and abortion was liberalised by the Supreme Court in 1973.

During the 1980s, Swedish women became frustrated with their under-representation at the political and interest group level. Moreover, gender inequalities in the labour market started to grow during the 1980s. Hence,

women joined the new political movements and organised feminist activities as well as networks. The SAP responded by increasing its number of female candidates. Moreover, women have since 1976 used their right to vote to a greater extent than men and they shifted their party voting in 1979 from the bourgeois block to the socialist block. In 1994, the SAP lost some of its female electorates due to its willingness to attack welfare rights that have enabled women to combine their roles as mothers and workers. The 'autonomous' women's groups in Germany became more willing to give up its autonomy during the 1980s due to the hostile reaction of the German governments to groups outside the political system. The success of the Green Party in promoting women candidates induced the established parties to promote women candidates. Moreover, women's party voting became less conservative during the 1970s. The conservative-liberal coalitions governing since the 1982, soon renewed its support for the family that deepened the split between the 'wives' and the career groups of women. The division was intensified during the unification period as the 'wives' group gained greater access to the 'male-privileged' social insurance programmes. Moreover, the unification created a new division between women living in the East and West Germany. In the United States, the women's movement suffered two major setbacks in the 1980s that included the narrow defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment ERA in 1982 and the weakening of the administration of the equal rights law[iii]. Women responded to the pro-family stance of the Republicans in 1980 by voting to a lesser extent for the Republican party than men creating a 'gender gap' in voting that prevailed during the 1980s and into the 1990s. During the 1980s and 1990s, the women's movement became more decentralised. However, employed women became more optimistic in the 1990s about the federal government's ability to implement welfare provisions and welfare rights. Women living in poverty on the other hand have a moreambiguous view of the American state as the federal states have violated their right to self-determination and increasingly intruded upon their privacy.

2. Consolidating traditional Division of Work

The Swedish multiparty system consisting of five parties was already in place when Swedish women gained the national suffrage in 1921 and it was not until the 1980s that a new party entered the system (see Hancock 1993:413)[iv]. In the 1920s and 1930s, women joined the political parties by entering separate women's organisations within four out of the five political parties (Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:99)[v]. Women have seldom organised separately, outside of or across established parties or unions. In order to gain political power Swedish women have had to work through a political party, preferably combined with the women's organisation of the party but not through women's organisations alone (see Eduards 1991:175). Moreover, women in independent groups and organisations have always worked together with women in political parties in order to promote women's interests at the political level (see Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:99). In addition, the centralised state system did not allow much space to groups outside the formal political system. The main federation of employers or the SAF (Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen) and the largest federation of the industrial unions or the LO (Landsorganisationen i Sverige) built an alliance soon after women entered the electoral system that became the dominant social block in Sweden until the 1980s. The very strong and initially militant working class was able in 1938 to impose a national class compromise favourable to the labour movement as their right to centralised collective negotiations was recognised by employers[vi]. The power of the labour movement was not only restricted to centralised bargaining. The LO was able to shape economic and social policies through its close links to the Social Democratic Party SAP that governed in Sweden during most of the post-war period (Regini 1995:38-39)[vii]. The SAF that represents corporates in manufacturing, commerce and forestry has on the other hand aligned with the bourgeois parties, particularly the Conservative party (Moderata Samlingspartiet) (Hancock 1993:423). However, the Swedish business leaders have often expressed confidence in the competence and reliability of the SAP as a governmental party (see Therborn 1991:121).

The key to the success of the inter-war and the post-war SAP was its ability to pursue several cross-class alliances simultaneously. The SAP built alliances between workers, farmers and the domestic industry on the one hand and between employers and labour in the export sectors to curtail the wage demands of unions in sectors sheltered against international competition on the other hand (Pontusson 1994:40). Although the Social Democratic

Women's League demanded in 1928 a role in the creation of the People's Home, radical changes of gender relations did not take place[viii]. The historical compromise between employers and labour did not create opportunity for a transformation of gender relations. Women's maternal role was therefore emphasised and supported by family-oriented social polices that originated from the widespread concerns with the population growth. In the first half of the 1990s, around 25 per cent of Swedish women of childberaring age chose not to have children. The trade unions had acknowledged women's right to work in the 1930s and after the war a third of Swedish women were in paid work. However, the unions did not promote women's labour force participation by demanding increased public expenditure on public child care. On the contrary, women's maternal role was actively supported during the 1930s and 1940s by free maternity care, a maternity allowance, child allowances and rental subsidies for families with children. Hence, women's role in the People's Home became the creation of the 'good home' where gender difference was recognised and even celebrated. The People's Home consisted therefore of mothers/housewives, farmers and workers (Jenson and Mahon 1993:82-85 and 91; Bergqvist 1994:162).

It was not until 1918 that German women gained the right to vote in parliamentary elections (Bergqvist 1994:58). At the same time women were allowed to attend schools and universities. The German Union for Women's Suffrage (Der Deutsche Verband für Frauenstimmrecht) established in 1902 was one of the many women's groups and women's associations that sprung to life in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. After gaining entrance to the electoral institutions, many feminist groups started to fight with some success for the decriminalisation of the abortion law or paragraph 218 of the Penal Code introduced in 1887[ix]. When the Allies established the West German model of democracy in 1949, they disregarded the various women's associations and women's groups that had been an important social force during the Weimar Republic. Moreover, many of the 'misogynist' views and laws from the Nazi period remained until the 1960s and 1970s (see Kaplan 1992:104-109). The Allies only acknowledged divisions along class, religious and regional lines inducing German women to organise within post-war unions, political parties and religious groups. The suppression of feminist activities during the Nazi period and the neglect of the past activities created a total break in the history of the women's movement in West Germany (Kaplan 1992:108). An umbrella organisation called the German Women's Council (Der Deutsche Frauenrat) was soon formed that was loosely linked to various

women's organisations within the political parties and the unions. The German Women's Council fought along with other women's groups for the inclusion of the Equal Rights Clause into the West German Basic Law that was adopted in 1949. However, the potential power of the Equal Rights Clause was greatly impaired by another clause in the Basic Law which expressly committed the state to defend and preserve the family. The Constitutional Court resolved the potential conflict by ruling that functional difference in the family and in the employment could justify different treatment of women and men (Ferree 1995:97-98). Although, women's labour force share was 29 per cent in 1948 and many women were the main breadwinner after the war, limited efforts were made to build child care facilities, improve women's working conditions and to reduce the wage gap between men and women. When the 'Wirtschaftswunder' started in the 1950s, the unions became increasingly disinterested in promoting women's interests that they had started to see more as social issues rather than workers' issues. Moreover, the legal rights of the family and the ruling of the Constitutional Court concerning the Equal Rights Clause had strengthened the housewife-marriage. Women therefore started to see the full-time housewife role as an attractive alternative to paid employment (see Buchholz-Will 1995:185-190).

The Allies fragmented and dispersed the political power among a variety of institutions and elites in West Germany. The political parties were made quasi-state institutions in order to secure coherence in the policy making[x]. Moreover, a system of consultation between politicians, state elites and the leading representatives of interest groups was introduced to secure coherence and consensus (see Conradt 1993). The major interest groups in West Germany have been those of employers, labour, agriculture, the churches and professional organisations that are well organised at the local, state and national levels and work closely with the political parties and the state (1993:243)[xi]. The German Trade Union Federation DGB (Der Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund) became labour's main political force and has pursued a policy of 'business unionism' concentrating on wages and working conditions (1993:246-247)[xii]. The Confederation of German Employers' Associations BDA (Die Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitsgeberverbände) became the central organisation of the strongly united and disciplined body of employers (Smith 1994:276). Strong alignment between the main organisation of employers and labour on the one hand and the political parties on the other hand was not established. Each major interest group maintains contact with all major parties. The labour unions have though had closer ties with the Social

Democratic Party SPD (Die Socialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) than the Christian Democratic Party CDU and its Bavarian partner Christian Social Union CSU (Die Christlich-Soziale Union) while employers have enjoyed warmer relationship with the CDU/CSU than the SPD (Conradt 1993:243-244). The political position and influence of the churches have been strong[xiii]. The dominant political party from 1949 to 1969 was the CDU that emphasised Christian principles and thereby gained the support of the Catholic church. The CDU has while in power been sensitive to issues such as state support of church schools and strict divorce and abortion laws stressed by the church. The SPD has on the other hand sought to have a normalised, less conflictual relationship with the church since the late 1950s (1993:203). The West German political system has been characterised by great stability in terms of government formation as well as by coalition governments. The Free Democratic party FDP was the junior coalition partner with the CDU/CSU governments from 1949 to 1957 and again from 1961 to 1965 (1993:222)[xiv].

American women gained the national suffrage in 1920 after long and bitter campaign (McDonagh 1990:46). The inclusion into the electoral system did not empower women politically as their maternal role had become the dominant identity in women's struggle for protective legislation in the workplace and for social welfare programmes. The male unionists regarded women as temporary workers who were subject to extraordinary exploitation due to their disadvantaged position in the labour market and lack of unionisation. Although an exception to the usual union practice of struggling for gains in the workplace, the unions demanded a protective legislation for women (Jenson 1989:256). The Supreme Court granted in 1908 a special protection for women that justified differential treatment of women and men workers (1989:243)[xv]. The only public social spending available across the United States until the 1930s was the mothers' pension that was pushed through by women who did not have the right to vote[xvi]. Hence, a certain group of American mothers could collect publicly founded social benefits while almost no American adult male worker could collect such benefits for either themselves or their dependants (Skocpol 1995:76). This maternal welfare programme laid the ground for the 'two-channel' welfare state established in the 1930s that addressed women and mothers and men as workers (Jenson 1989:241; Skocpol 1995:76). The emphasis on women's reproductive role located them outside the formal political system. The political system was highly developed at the time of women's entrance and reproductive issues were in most cases regarded as private matters. Hence, the

political activities of the suffragette movement disintegrated and women became depoliticised (see McDonagh 1990:51; Katzenstein 1992:31). As a response to the long struggle for the vote, Congress established the Women's Bureau[xvii] by statue in 1920 that has basically pursued the interests of organised labour. Moreover, the Equal Rights Amendment ERA to the Constitution was first proposed to Congress in the early 1920s by women inside and outside the political and state organisations but without success (Sapiro 196:123; Stetson 1995:256 and 267). According to Stetson, efforts to promote women's issues in the post-war period were frustrated by the unresolved conflict between demands for equality defined in terms of non-discrimination supported by those in favour of the ERA on the one hand and demands to preserve and extend special protections for women in the workforce advocated by the unions and the Democratic party on the other hand. It was first in 1963 that the President's Commission on the Status of Women found common ground and Congress passed the Equal Pay Act in 1963 and the Civil Rights Act passed in 1964 prohibited discrimination based on sex in employment (1995:256).

The Democratic party took over from the Republican party as the majority party in the 1930s when it managed to build the so-called New Deal coalition consisting of the South, the unions, the big cities, ethnic groups and academics. The Republican party emerged after the Civil War as the party of national unity and it soon became dominated by the coalition of industrialists, bankers, Northern and Western farmers and some industrial workers (McKay 1993:88). The decentralised (federalism) and divided government (Congress versus the presidency) fragmented the organisational structure of the two main parties making them coalitions of interests of number of social groups and regional interests instead of a political entity capable of countering interest group influences (1993:82; Piven 1991:236 and 244). The most important groups supporting the Democratic party at the outset of the New Deal period were the white Southerners presenting agricultural interests and the working class (Piven 1991:238)[xviii]. As a result of restricted franchise in the South, decentralisation as concerns representation to the Senate and the electorate college and division of power between the presidency and the Congress, the Southern agricultural interests were strong within the Democratic party and thereby Congress since the party had the majority of seats during most of the post-war period (1991:247; McKay 1993:82 and 135).

The electoral coalition of the white Southerners and the working class did, however, not last for long. The Southerners soon formed an alliance with the business-oriented Republicans in Congress who could join forces in an attempt to hinder the implementation of new social programmes and policies in favour of labour. This new alliance made certain that the legislative protections of the National Labour Relations Act won by mass strikes in the mid-1930s were eroded within few years by given the states the necessary autonomy to undercut this federal policy[xix]. Moreover, the low turnout of working class voters and the growing susceptibility of the Congress to business lobbyists and the lack of resistance by the Democratic presidents to the assault on the unions further alienated the unions from the Democratic party (Piven 1991:250). According to Piven, the Southern Democrats and business-oriented Republicans were able to ensure that the new national welfare state programmes introduced in the 1930s conformed to regional and sectoral diversified labour markets. Regional variations were safeguarded by granting the states and in some instances the counties part of the authority over the unemployment insurance program and other 'categorical' welfare programmes securing that local employers were able to influence the conditions of eligibility and benefit levels[xx]. Sectoral diversification was constituted by excluding many categories of low wage workers from the old age and unemployment insurance programmes. The domination of the South agricultural interests and the business-oriented Republicans in Congress forced the unions to return to the workplace where they bargained with employers for, e.g. health insurance (1991:252-253)[xxi]. As concerns gender interests, there was no significant difference between men's and women's party and candidate voting in Congress and Presidential elections from the 1950s until the 1970s. Hence, women were not considered to be a group that required a special attention by the Democratic and Republican parties (Molitor 1991:103).

3. Institutional constraints

The unitary state system, the highly institutionalised legislative process and the possibility of forming a minority government are institutional factors that have shaped women's political struggle and women's position in Sweden. Parliamentary politics are the most important level of struggle in a unitary state as the functions exercised by national and local institutions are constitutionally subordinated to the parliament and the central government

(see Hancock 1993:398). Hence, women have been able to concentrate their efforts at one governmental level in their struggle for reforms and new initiatives. The strong position of the LO within the legislative process has enabled it to influence the content of and the boundaries between state legislation and collective bargaining. Moreover, the highly institutionalised participation of the public officials who have emphasised consensus and of the principal organised interest groups (employers and organised labour) in state commissions as well as the remiss consultative procedure has made it difficult for women to enter the policy formulation without accommodating to class politics (see Elman 1995:239)[xxii]. The centralisation of the state has ensured that policies are implemented in a unified manner. The Swedish Constitution permits the formation of minority governments in the absence of a majority that has contributed to the success of the SAP in remaining the main governmental party during most of the post-war period[xxiii]. Moreover, the party has been in favour of state intervention and public social policy to ensure fair redistribution (Marklund 1992:3). Hence, the centralisation of the state, the involvement of employers and labour in the policy formation and the long governmental period of the SAP that has had close ties with organised labour have ensured that welfare policies and labour market policies have been relatively coherent and complementary. Contradictions as concerns women's assumed role have therefore been comparatively few making them a rather homogeneous group of mothers until the 1960s and then working mothers.

The institutional features affecting the political efforts of women and their position in Germany are the federal state system, the judicial review power of the Constitutional Court, the fragmented social policy administration, the consensus policy formation process and the effective necessity of a government by a coalition. Germany is a federal state in which certain governmental functions are reserved to the constituent federal states (Länder) that in turn share to some extent responsibilities with the municipalities (Kommunen). The national government is responsible to the Bundestag (the lower house of parliament) while the states are represented by the Bundesrat (the upper house)[xxiv]. Public spending is shared between the federal, state and local governments[xxv]. This fragmented governmental structure has entailed that policies affecting women directly are made at the state and the local levels. Women have therefore been more inclined to focus on the state and the local levels in their struggle for improvements and/or changes. Hence, women's political struggle at the national level has been weak and West Germany lagged until the 1970s behind other Western European countries in setting up

formal policy channels to address women's concerns. Assistance at the federal level has come from the European Community EC. The federal parliament mandated in 1979 an equal treatment for women in paid employment to bring the West German law into compliance with the EC directives from 1975 and 1976 (Ferree 1995:98-99).

The West German federalism has not resulted in great variations in the conditions of, e.g. women across the country as there are at least three unifying mechanisms to ensure balanced development. First, the federal state governments and their bureaucracies are involved in the legislative process at the national level as members of the Bundesrat. Secondly, the laws and rules of procedure for state bureaucracies are unified. Finally, the constitution requires a 'unity of living standards' (Finanzausgleichung) throughout the republic (Conradt 1993:271)[xxvi]. Moreover, the power of the Constitutional Court to engage in judicial review or to examine and strike down legislation if considered to be contrary to the constitution is another dimension of the federal structure that has had implications for women's struggle in the areas of equal rights and abortion. After the Christain Democrats had appeal to the Constitutional Court, the court overturned in 1974 and again in 1993 acts passed at the federal level to liberalise the abortion law. The reform legislation passed by the social-liberal coalition in 1974 allowing termination of a pregnancy in the first 12 weeks provided the pregnant women agreed and the termination was carried out by a doctor never came into effect as the Constitutional Court ruled against it. The Constitutional Court rejected in 1993 large parts of the new Abortion Act from 1992 that involved a deterioration from the East German statute and a small improvement from the West German statute. According to the Abortion Act of 1992, abortion continued to be a criminal offensive except if a women who was less than 12 weeks pregnant consulted a doctor in an emergency clinic three days before the abortion. A legal entitlement of a place at a kindergarten for all children above the age of three from 1996 was passed with the abortion law. According to the new abortion law, abortions on social grounds are no longer allowed within the first 12 weeks but women can no longer be prosecuted for their 'wrongful' doing. The court has stressed through its rulings that the protection of the unborn had priority over the women's right of self determination (see Maleck-Lewy 1995).

The German administration of social policies is even more fragmented than the governmental structure. The federal state guarantees and checks that social

rights are fulfilled by other agencies including the Länder, municipalities, the social partners who control the social insurance funds as well as independent social service agencies[xxvii]. It has been difficult for, e.g. women to innovate or reform the social policy area as consensus must be established across many organisations, both service agencies and insurance funds. However, the support given by local, Land and federal authorities to voluntary organisations in the provision of social services has created scope for alternative initiatives in the area of, e.g. child care and health care that women have made used of in the 1970s and 1980s (Freeman and Clasen 1994:11-13; Chamberlayne 1994:175). Moreover, the complicated consensus political bargaining involved in policy making at federal level has led to high levels of spending on existing programmes at the cost of policy innovation (Freeman and Clasen 1994:3)[xxviii]. Hence, it has been difficult to press through policies that could modify the contradictions women face when trying to combine the role of wife and mother with a career. The privileges involved in being a 'standard worker' encourages women to pursue career without having children while the welfare system is the most supportive towards the unemployed married housewife (Chamberlayne 1994:176). In addition, the effective necessity to form a coalition government[xxix] has further impeded fundamental changes as the FDP that has been the main coalition partner of both the SPD and CDU/CSU has opposed policies involving redistribution of economic resources and power. The inability of the institutional framework to respond to innovation and reform initiatives has also frustrated attempts to reverse welfare rights (see Freeman and Clasen 1994:12; Conradt 1993:268-269).

In the United States, federalism, the power of the Supreme Court to engage in judicial review, divided government, fragmented political parties and a complex policy formation and implementation process have affected women and gender politics. The federalism in the United States involves decentralisation of responsibilities between the federal, state and local governments[xxx]. The definition of federal and state roles has been left to judicial interpretation (McKay 1993:62). The states are important administrative and political units and each has its own separate legal and political system (1993:78). The American federalism is different from the German federalism as the American states do not have unified laws for divorce, bankruptcy or criminal offences (Conradt 1993:271). In addition, American federal laws often permit flexibility as concerns implementation at the state level[xxxi]. Federal regulation and spending expanded from 1930 to 1950 as a result of a co-operative federalism as concerns intergovernmental relation that was facilitated by the

economic difficulties of the 1930s and external threat. However, the intergovernmental relations have became more fragmented as programmes and policies proliferated at all governmental levels (McKay 1993:66-76). The flexibility provided by federal regulation has increasingly become an opportunity for competition among states and for businesses playing one state off another (Tarullo 1992:105). Hence, standards as concerns, e.g. labour market policies and social assistance are not harmonised across the states leading to considerably variations in the conditions of, e.g. employed women as well as women on welfare across the United States. Hence, the poor in the poorest states receive the least due to the uneven standards of social assistance (Skocpol 1995:14). Moreover, state and local officials can exercise more administrative discretion in welfare programmes from which single (black) mothers have benefited than in federally administrated social security programmes from which (white) men have benefited as wage-earners and (white) women to a lesser extent as wives and widows (see Fraser 1989:150-151). In order to challenge laws passed by state and national legislatures together with all executive actions, women can appeal to the Supreme Court (McKay 1993:249). Hence, the Court is the final arbiter with respect to how women's role is formally interpreted. Moreover, the Court has affected the strategies of the civil rights and women's movements by chosen individual rights rather than collective rights of Blacks and other minorities who have sought redress for a pattern of past discrimination. In 1973, the Court outlawed all state laws prohibiting abortion during the first three months grounded on the individual rights of women (1993:270).

The federal government in the United States is divided between Congress and the presidency. The legislative power is vested in the House of Representatives and the Senate or Congress (McKay 1993:132)[xxxii]. The Constitution assigns to the presidency the roles of chief executive and with time the president has become the 'chief' legislator[xxxiii]. Hence, the president frames most major laws, draws up the budget and has the responsibility for implementing all laws (1993:175 and 192). The federalism and the division of power have forced the women's movement to recognise various levels of subordination against which struggle has to be organised (Katzenstein 1992:29). Women have been able to make use of the federal structure but their struggle has also been impaired by that same structure. According to McDonagh (1990) women's success in gaining the vote was the result of their strategy designed to take advantage of the federal structure. The strategy involved putting pressure on the president and carrying out campaigns at the

state level in order to ensure successful passage of the suffrage amendment through Congress. Women have not had the same success in getting the ERA through the federal system but their main strategy has been to fight for the amendment at the federal level or in Congress. Access to members of Congress is relatively easy but women and other lobby groups have not been able to count on the support of one of the two parties when lobbying for their interests in Congress as the parties have taken up issues of various groups (see McKay 1993:222). The parties are constellations of different interest groups and their elected members are more dependent on the regional support for their candidature than the party support (see Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:127). Hence, the interests of many localities and interest groups need to be brokered into most laws in Congress. As a result of the divisions at the federal level and between federal, state and local governments, thousands of different policies are at any one time being implemented, each with its own political, interest group and bureaucratic supporters (McKay 1993:72). The complicated policy formation and implementation make it difficult for women to reform policies without accommodating to the interests of various other groups. Hence, policy changes are only incremental and very seldom involve redistribution of economic resources and power. The social welfare programmes have basically treated women as wives, and mothers (Sapiro 1986:125). In recent years, women on 'welfare' are increasingly provided with the necessary assistance to be able to work (Thompson and Norris 1995:7). The contradictions other women face when combining various roles have not been modified, although the majority of American women now need to combine the role of wife and mother with a career[xxxiv]. Moreover, public policies in the United States reinforce regional differences and labour market differentiation. Hence, American women are divided across class, ethnical/racial and family lines.

4. New challenges and shifts in the Balance of Power

a) The case of Sweden

The development of the Swedish People's Home started first in the mid-1950s but the name refers to social relations based on equality, consideration and cooperation. At this time, the system of centralised collective bargaining became a regular practice in Sweden and social expenditure expanded, especially in the area of social security. However, women were not satisfaction with their maternal role (Jenson and Mahon 1993:84-:85; Bergqvist 1994:162)[xxxv]. In the

early 1960s, a largely female group of sociologists, economists and psychologists advocated the break-up of the sexual division of labour in the home and demanded policies of equal opportunities and affirmative action outside the home in the welfare state and in employment. The Social Democratic Women's League took up these ideas in 1964 and struggled for their acceptance within the SAP. As a result of growing pressure from the women's groups and other social movements demanding greater equality, the leadership of the SAP renewed during the 1960s its socialist commitment to equality of outcome in terms of both class and gender. The equality program adopted by the SAP in 1969 was by no means a feminist declaration as ideas of 'sexual' quality had been integrated into an equality program that had something for everybody (Ginsburg 1992:32 and 50-51). Motivated by the labour shortage in the 1960s caused by export-led economic boom and the expansion in almost all fields of welfare provisions, the LO and the SAP started to incorporate women's issues into their class politics. The LO and the SAF agreed in the early 1960s to end a separate women's wage classifications and LO was committed to use the centralised wage agreements to reduce wage differentials or to achieve wage solidarity (Jenson and Mahon 1993:87-88). Policy reforms stimulated by the 'sexual' equality movement were the introduction of separate income tax assessment for wife and husband (1971), extensive statutory parental leave (1974), a liberation of the abortion law (1976), the Equal Status (jämställdhet) law (1979) and a great expansion in public expenditure on child care (Ginsburg 1992:51; Statistics Sweden 1995:6). Hence, women became identified as working mothers and women's equality was to be achieved through collective negotiations and not through legislature and state initiatives (see Elman 1995; Persson 1990:229). The measures undertaken by the SAP and the LO stimulated women's labour force participation that went from 59 per cent in the 1970 to 74 per cent in 1980 (Jenson and Mahon 1993:91). In order to cope with the double burden, around 47 per cent of women worked fewer than 32 hours or part time in 1980 (see Sundström 1993:41). However, the majority of women did not identify with the SAP to the same extent as men during this period. From 1960 to 1979, women were more likely to support the bourgeois block or the Center party (Centerpartiet), the Liberal party (Folkpartiet) and the Conservative party than the socialist block (socialistiska blocket) or the Left party and the SAP (Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:79-77)[xxxvi].

The class compromise achieved in 1938 started to breakdown during the 1970s and continued through the 1980s. The breakdown can be attributed to

structural changes, growing internal divisions among labour, a shift in the balance of power, and to the fragmentation of the parliamentary party system. The Swedish industry experienced falling export demand and technological/organisational exhaustion from 1974 onwards (Ryner 1994:412). Hence, industrial employment contracted during the 1970s while employment in services expanded (OECD 1993:187). This development weakened the leading role of the Metalworkers Union (Svenska metallindustriarbetareförbundet) within the LO and the growing number of public sector employees made a wage policy based on the private sector blue collar unions as the wage setters less acceptable. The tensions within the labour movement were intensified by the organisational division between the unions of white collar workers (TCO and SACO)[xxxvii] and the union of blue collar workers or the LO (Ryner 1994:402; Mahon 1991:303). Moreover, women had more success in promoting their interests within the white collar unions than within the LO that was not willing to present itself as the largest women's organisation until the 1990s (Jenson and Mahon 1993:96-97). The balance of power shifted towards employers during the 1970s and 1980s due to the ineffective wage-earner funds, breakdown of centralised collective bargaining and greater internationalisation of Swedish capital. In order to make wage restraint more acceptable to workers in high profit firms and to transfer capital ownership to employees, the LO adopted in 1976 a proposal for wage-earner funds, to be financed by the extra profits. However, the wage-earner funds did not appeal to all social groups as they excluded domestic workers and pensioners. Moreover, employers and the non-socialist government of 1976-1982 resisted their implementation. When the wage-earner funds were finally introduced in 1984, their functions had been changed so much that they could not reduce the growing concentration of capital ownership (Standing 1988:139-143). Moreover, employers in the engineering industry managed to split the fold of the LO in 1983 when it got the powerful Metalworkers Union to bargain separately in order to achieve higher wage (Ryner 1994:404). The decentralisation of the wage bargaining has lead to growing wage dispersion especially between the private and public sector and to widening gender wage gap but the unintended effect of the centralised bargaining was a contraction in the gender wage gap (see, e.g. le Grand 1994:121). Finally, Swedish employers have in recent years weakened the power of the unions by becoming more mobile. After 1987, Swedish investment overseas rose sharply and by 1990 it exceeded 6 per cent, higher than any other developed economy (Wilks 1996:103).

During the 1980s and early 1990s, the parliamentary party system started to fragment, first on the left and then on the right. Moreover, the support for the SAP became more unreliable. It became increasingly apparent in the early 1980s that the SAP had not managed to incorporate all groups into its vision of the People's Home. Dissatisfaction was growing among environmentalists and women. Women were still underrepresented among the top level representatives within the LO and the SAP and experiencing gender inequalities in the labour market. Hence, women joined the new political movements such as the peace and environmental movements and organised feminist activities (see Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:39 and 70). In 1985, the Women's Party was established and a Women's network (Stödstrumporna) operated secretly (Eduards 1992:87-89). In order to sustain its political support, the SAP sought during the 1980s to include into its policies some of the demands put forward by the new social movements. The number of female representatives was gradually increased and after the election in 1994 women constituted 48 per cent of the party representatives in the Riksdag (see Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:101). However, the Environmentalist Party-the Greens (Miljöpartiet De Gröna) managed in 1988 to become the first new party to enter parliament in seventy years appealing to young electorates as well as to women (see Hancock 1993:411; Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:78-79)[xxxviii]. Moreover, gender relations at the electoral level were changing. Women had since 1979 used their voting right to a greater extent than men[xxxix] and they had also changed their party voting such that the socialist block had a female surplus and the bourgeois block had a male surplus after 1979. However, the difference or what has been termed the gender gap was only significant in the elections 1985 and 1988 and it almost disappeared in 1991 and 1994 (Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:53 and 78-79)[xl].

Although the SAP has been the largest party in Sweden since 1932, its electoral support has become more unstable as it has been unsuccessful in accommodating new and old social divisions such as class, gender and generational divisions[xli]. The willingness of the SAP's leadership to lower welfare benefits and limit welfare service expansion have contributed to the party's lose of electorates among blue collar workers and later women (Jenson and Mahon 1993:92-95). The ties with the LO have loosened in recent years due to tensions between public and private sector unions on the one hand and between party unionists (LO) and those advocating more party democracy on the other hand. The SAP has not been able to maintain

women's support due to its contradictory policies promoting on the one hand women's representation within the party and attacking on the other hand welfare rights that have enabled women to combine their roles as mothers and workers. By 1989, the fertility rate in Sweden was among the highest in the Western World[xlii]. The female surplus that the SAP had after the elections in 1979 changed in 1994 to a male surplus of 3 per cent as a result of an announcement made by the Social Democrats shortly before the election that they would reduce the number of paid sick days. After the election in 1991, the parliamentary party system showed further signs of fragmentation. Two new parties enter the Riksdag were the New Democratic party (Ny Demokrati) and the Christian Democratic party (Kristdemokratiska Samhällspartiet) but the Environmentalist Party-the Greens lost their parliamentary mandate. After the election in 1994, the Greens re-entered the Riksdag but the New Democratic party lost its parliamentary mandate. Moreover, there existed a gender gap and a generation gap among electorates in the parliamentary elections in 1994. Women 45 years and younger were more likely to vote for the socialist block than men[xliii]. In addition, women 46 years and older voted to a greater extent for the bourgeois block than younger women. On the contrary, men 45 years and younger were more inclined to vote for the bourgeois block than older men (see Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:78-79).

b) The case of Germany

In the 1950s and 1960s, the family policy under the CDU aimed at strengthening the family, foster self-sufficiency and protect family privacy. Women were, e.g. prohibited by law to take employment without their husband's permission (Chamberlayne 1994:174 and 179). In addition, the time pupils were required to spend in education and training was lengthened and the retirement age was lowered. Hence, women's labour force share fell slightly or from 31 per cent in 1950 to 30 per cent in 1970 and men's labour force share dropped during the same period from 63 per cent to 58 per cent (Molitor 1991:47-48). The dramatic fall in the number of children from 2 children in 1950 to 1 one child in 1970 for each marriage may on the other hand explain why the labour force share of women increased from 25 per cent in 1950 to 36 per cent in 1970 (see 1991:48-51). The coalition of the CDU and the SDP from 1969 brought a more critical view of the family seeing it as an obstacle to social equality and to the emancipation of both women and children. The

Marriage and Family Rights reform implemented in 1977 introduced the notion of partnership between husband and wife and equal worth between the wife's employment outside the home and her family roles as family caring became recognised in the pension law. Moreover, women could take up paid work without their husband's consent (Chamberlayne 1994:179-180). Women's aspirations and political preferences started to change during the 1970s. Notably fewer women wanted to be 'just housewives' at the end of 1970s than in the beginning of the 1960s and women's party voting became more similar to that of men. During the 1950s and 1960s, greater proportion of women had voted for the conservative parties (CDU/CSU) than men[xliv]. Women's position as housewives and their religious believe or Catholicism may explain this gender difference in party voting (Rudolph 1993:53; Molitor 1991:26). It was not until 1986 that women's labour force participation started to show sign of continuous increase but the growth of the service sector started first after the mid-1980s in West Germany. Women's employment participation has been relatively low in West Germany when compared with other countries in North America and Western Europe[xlv]. Limited institutional support such as child care for working mothers and the splitting of the income of married couples introduced in 1958 that favours a homeworking wife has contributed to the limited growth in women's labour force participation. Moreover, the conservative-liberal coalition of 1982 advocated a new valuing of women's domestic roles and a convenient return from the labour market to the home due to growing unemployment and falling birth rate (Chamberlayne 1994:180; Kaplan 1992:144). Pension credits were granted for caring (1986 and 1992) and the care of the sick and the elderly was recognised in the pension system from 1995 (see Bieback 1992:244; Clasen 1994:79).

The 'new' women's movement in West Germany started in the early 1970s and was catalysed by the strict abortion law making abortion a punishable crime. The oppressive nature of the church and its influence on politics was also of concern to many women activists. The abortion issue was taken up by the political parties and drafts were prepared of an amendment and put to the test in Constitutional Court. The amendment was accepted with extensive restrictions in 1977 such that abortion was allowed in specific situations or in case of grave health reasons, eugenic and/or circumstantial problems (Kaplan 1992:114-117). Many women groups used the scope for alternative pluralist initiatives during the 1970s and 1980s and organised along 'autonomous' alternative institutional structures in areas of child care, safe houses and equal rights offices (see Chamberlayne 1994:175). However, the West German

governments have during the years of active feminist movement demonstrated that they do not allow special interest groups to interfere. The strive of many women's groups for autonomy from the political machinery was therefore not very successful. Hence, many women's groups have during the 1980s become more willing to give up its autonomy in order to work with and through government institutions (see Kaplan 1992:143). In 1979, the Women's Party was formed (Frauenpartei) which has so far not been able to breake through the 5 per cent of the vote clause to get into the Bundestag. However, the women's movement entered parliamentary politics during the 1980s through political alternative movements like the Greens (Die Grüne Partei). In 1983, the Green Party was the first newly formed party to enter Bundestag since the 1950s. The ecological and feminist considerations of the Green Party have attracted women but they have had to fight for a place within the party by creating their women's lists (1992:127; Conradt 1993:240). The success of the Greens in promoting women candidates and appealing to young women induced both the SPD and the CDU to increase the number of women candidates after the mid-1980s (Capman 1993:237). Since the elections in 1983, the CDU/CSU has once again had a greater number of women among its electorates, however, the female deficit was smaller from 1983 to 1990 than from 1953 and 1969 (Molitor 1991:25-32; Statistisches Bundesamt)[xlvi]. The pro-family stance of the Kohl governments involving child allowances and glorification of motherhood has found support by certain fraction of the women's movement (Kaplan 1992:118). Many radical feminists have argued for difference to the point of a separation of roles between men and women. However, the CDU have claimed that they were promoting shared role and equality between housewives and employed women (Chamberlayne 1994:182).

The West German 'consensus' model has come under growing pressure due to fragmentation of the parliamentary party system and growing tensions between employers and labour. Moreover, unification has both enhanced social divisions and created conditions for changes that are no longer incremental. The vote for the SPD increased from the election in 1953 to the election in 1972 when it received 46,3 per cent of the votes. The SPD's attempts in the sixties and early 1970s to integrate the new generation were not very successful and the party started to loose voters that continued through the 1980s and until the elections in 1994. (Statistisches Bundesamt; von Baratta 1995:159). The cultural and generational revolt in the late sixties paved the way for the emergence of the Greens but many of its activists had

worked within the SPD but had been unsuccessful in reforming the party (Padgett and Paterson 1994:113). The development of the Greens was soon marked by a battle between the pragmatic wing or the 'Realos' who were interested in co-operation with the SPD and the fundamentalist wing or the 'Fundis' who did not want any arrangement with the SPD as they would help the latter to absorb the Greens in the long run. The balance between the two has been shifting but the majority of party members have in fact been the realist (1994:111). The vote for CDU/CSU has been more stable than that of the SPD fluctuating from 43,3 in 1953 to 48,5 in 1983. In 1994, the party received 41,5 per cent of the total vote in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt; van Baratta 1995:159). It became apparent after the European parliament in 1989 that the CDU/CSU was not able to appeal voters on the far right as the Republicans (Republikaner) received 7,1 per cent of the votes in the election (see Molitor 1991:121). However, the support for the Republicans declined after 1992 when the constitutional rule concerning asylum-seeker was made more strict and they failed to be re-elected to the European parliament (Gibowski 1995:31). Further fragmentation of the parliamentary party system took place after the all German election in 1990 when the East German based party, the old Communist Party PDS (Die Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus) managed to enter the Bundestag (Conradt 1993:243). After the elections in 1994, the PDS was more strongly presented in Bundestag than in 1990. Like the Greens, the PDS did particularly well among younger female voters (Betz and Welsh 1995). The strong position of employers in West Germany was strengthen during the 1980s. The return of the CDU/CSU to power in 1982 was supported by employers and the coalition government of the CDU/CSU and the FDP passed a legislation in 1986 that weakened the trade unions' capacity to strike (Conradt 1993:246-248). The reduction in entitlements and levels of benefit in the areas of health, pension and social security that had started under Chancellor Schmidt in the late 1970s were intensified in between 1982 and 1985 but stopped as a result of the CDU's poor performance in regional elections (Freeman and Clasen 1994:12).

During the unification process, the West German trade unions were readily accepted in the East and they soon became organised on an all-German basis (Smith 1992:202). The inclusion of East Germans reduced the imbalance between male and female membership but 49 per cent of the East German labour force was female at the time of unification as compared to 38 per cent in the West (Lane 1994:194; Kolinsky 1992:265). Wages in West Germany were low in relation to the return of employers in the early 1990s due to the

wage restraints implemented in the late 1980s. Hence, the unions demanded higher wages when the economy started to boom in the West after the unification and renewed their demand for a 35-hour week. Outbreak of labour unrest took place in 1992 as the trade unions claimed that ordinary wage earners had been forced to bear the burnt of the unification. The West Germans have paid for the unification by running huge government deficits and by relaxing the contribution principle of social insurance programmes such as the unemployment insurance and pension insurance thereby granting many of the new entrees exceptionally 'cheap' admission to the system. After the strike of the public sector unions, wage increases beyond the inflation rate were accepted (Smith 1992:51 and 203; Ganssmann 1993:85-87). The German unions have become more heterogeneous as the East and the West members do not share the same economic situation and industrial and political demands. The lack of cohesiveness within the unions has enabled employers to utilise these divisions (Lane 1994:194). Moreover, mass unemployment, especially in the East has weakened the unions in the mid-1990s and employers' demand of a reduction in workers' social benefits has become a feasible political measure to undertake.

The German unification has not only led to more extensive access to social insurance programmes but also to greater federal centralisation. As a result of social difficulties and financial weakness in the East, the federal government has been in many cases forced to move into areas traditionally the responsibility of the federal states. Moreover, the financial framework of the federal government that was originally planned as an instrument to fine-tune the economic convergence of the states has been transformed into extensive aid programmes for the East German states (Sturm 1992:127-131). The unification has been a great disappointment to many women as it has not involved extensive improvements in the area of child care and abortion. The most favourable development is women's greater access to the 'male-privileged' social insurance programmes. Moreover, divisions between the 'wives' group and the 'careerists' group of women deepened during the unification period and a new division was created between women in the East and West Germany. The unification has created more opportunities for those women willing and able to work, especially in the West while family work has received greater recognition. At the time of the unification, the East German women were in most cases working mothers who wanted to achieve West German standard of living. The East German women have had to pay a high price for unification as social services, social benefits and the right to an

abortion have been eroded. Moreover, co-operation between feminists in the East and West Germany has not been without problems due to their different ideological background as well as social and economic situation (see Rosenberg 1991:18).

c) The case of the United States

In the United States, the core New Deal social insurance programmes or the old-age insurance and unemployment insurance of the 1930s did not reach most blacks and many women since occupations in agriculture and the service sector were excluded from social insurance taxes and coverage. Women who were surviving dependants (1939) were covered by the old-age insurance or what is termed as Social Security. The poorer caretakers of children who were increasingly women outside wedlock were left to be helped by Aid to Families with Dependent Children AFDC or what Americans call 'welfare[xlvii]. Variations in benefits and eligibility in public assistance at the state level allowed state and local officials to exercise administrative discretion causing the blacks and poor women to be deprived of adequate welfare assistance (see Skocpol 1995:218-219 and 256). By the 1960s, blacks were pressing the federal government and the Democratic party to expand the few social programmes available and for new programmes to address their needs. The Democratic party responded to the demands made by the civil rights movement with the Great Society programmes involving War on Poverty. New layers of programmes especially targeted for both white and black poor were tacked onto the Social Security System (1995:220-221). Federal expenditures for cash and in-kind transfers directly targeted to the poor almost tripled from the end of the fiscal year 1969 through the fiscal year 1974. Most of the increase was not in cash assistance but in programmes such as Food Stamps, Medicaid[xlviii], housing subsides and student aid (1995:257). One of the major achievements of the civil rights movement and women's movement was an expansion of the AFDC that had been relatively minor part of the welfare state in the 1960s. Moreover, the expansion of employment in the welfare state was the most important stimulus behind the greater economic mobility of women and minorities (Ginsburg 1992:108 and 111). In 1972, federal old age and other assistance programmes were nationalised in order to ensure more standardised benefits. However, the much larger AFDC remained federally decentralised (Skocpol 1995:14). When the real income of blue collar and middle income white collar workers and their families started to decline along with a rising tax burden, the support for the Democratic party and its anti-poverty policies started to fade (Skocpol 1995:258). The Great

Society programmes became vulnerable to criticism as they were expensive and neither eliminated poverty nor benefited the white working class (Skocpol 1995:222; Thompson and Norris 1995:5).

The demands made by the civil rights movement influenced the women's movement during the 1960s and the 1970s. More and more women became mobilised around equal rights ideology and women on the left who wanted to hold on to special protective laws were pushed aside (Stetson 1995:262). In 1966, women frustrated with unwillingness of the government to enforce antidiscrimination legislation in the area of gender, organised the first leadership group for the National Organisation for Women NOW (1995:256). The NOW became active in pursuing legal changes in the status of women as concerns education, employment and reproductive rights. Many other national, state and local organisations that struggled for related goals were formed in the following years. One of the best known organisations is the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) that is devoted to increasing the influence of women in government. Apart from these liberal feminist organisations were women activities involved in the new social movements of the 1960s that organised more at the local level (Sapiro 1986:123). The advocates for equality and nondiscrimination were successful in promoting women's individual rights at the federal level between 1966 and 1972. Achievements during this period include the Equal Pay Act (1963), the Title VII of Civil Rights Act (1964), a ban on sex discrimination among governmental contractors (1968), banning of discrimination in education pro grammes receiving federal funds and the passing of the ERA in Congress in 1972 (Stetson 1995:262; Sapiro 1986:126). In 1973, a very important victory was won when the Supreme Court (the Roe v. Wade case) effectively outlawed all state laws that prohibited abortion during he first three months of pregnancy, liberalised them during the new three months and banned abortions during the last ten weeks (McKay 1993:270)[xlix]. During the 1960s and 1970s, American women were slowly integrated into the labour market as individuals and complaints of pregnancy discrimination started to grow. Instead of pursuing pregnancy discrimination as a form of protective labour law, liberal feminists argued that pregnancy was a temporary job-related disability. After a long battle at the federal level, advocates of the pregnancy disability leave managed to secure the passing of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act in Congress in 1978 (Stetson 1995:264)[l]. Moreover, Congress passed in 1993 the Family and Medical leave legislation that had been a central element of Clinton's agenda and a top priority of congressoinal Democrats. The Family and Medical leave

Act requires that employers grant their employees unpaid family or medical leave of up to twelve weeks when requested (Campell and Rockman 1996:100 and 267).

The women's equal rights movement suffered two major setbacks in the 1980s. The narrow defeat of the ERA in 1982 after many years of campaigning by the women's movement was the first defeat. The second defeat was the weakening of the administration of the equal rights laws by cuts in funding and staffing for the regulatory agencies (Ginsburg 1992:112-113). President Reagan (1981-1988) appointed more women to government positions than did his predecessors. For the first time, a woman became a Supreme Court judge and two women were appointed to government. However, the women appointed by Reagan to governmental positions were conservative and anti-feminists as they opposed the ERA and reproductive choice (Sapiro 1986:130-133; McKay 1993:255). These appointments enhanced divisions among women and many women's groups started to insist that their representatives pusued women's interests. By appointing more women to office, Reagan was responding to the 'gender gap' in voting. In the presidential elections in 1980, Reagan received 54 per cent of the male votes and only 46 per cent of the female vote. This gender gap in men's and women's voting behaviour continued to exist all through the 1980s and into the 1990s. In 1992, Clinton received 46 per cent of women's vote and only 41 per cent of men's vote. Younger, single women are most likely to vote Democratic. The gender gap has been contributed to the influences of the women's movement as an interest group, women's greater economic autonomy and professionalisation as well as the so-called war and peace issues (Molitor 1991:103-104; Katzenstein 1992:35; McKay 1993:125). Moreover, there has been a high and consistent support for the Democrats among the Black and some other minority voters (McKay 1993:126)[li]. Although Reagan supported women's maternal role, his administration increased tax credits for child care expenses at the same time as funds for child care were cut (Sapiro 1986:133). The tax relief on child care expenses and the employer paid health insurance programmes which accompany most full time and not part time employment are important reasons for the predominance of full time employment of women in the US. Moreover, the family policy includes an ideology of privacy, self-sufficiency and the celebration of motherhood and disciplinary benefits on the one hand and services aimed at the poor and the racialised minorities on the other hand (Ginsburg 1992:113 and 119). Hence nurseries are either profit organisations or non-profit organisations frequently receiving supported from public funds

(1992:125). As a result of falling real hourly earnings since the 1977, women have increased their labour force participation in order to maintain the real value of family incomes. Women's participation rate rose, e.g. from 58 per cent in 1977 to 70 per cent in 1992 (OECD 1994:462-463). The growth in women's labour force participation and earnings were the main generator of the family income growth during the 1980s (Mishel and Berstein 1993:15). The women's movement has become more decentralised during the 1980s and early 1990s consisting of many small groups working within enterprise, communities, professional associations, universities and religious groups (Katzentstein 1992:31).

A distinct feature of the American political system is that it has always had just two major parties competing for major offices. However, these parties have not always been the same two parties (McKay 1993:80-81). During the 1960s and early 1970s, American blacks were finally fully mobilised into the Democratic party but the party was incapable of creating a coalition of workers, blacks and some middle class people due to its internal contradictions between the conservative Southerners and its urban members (see Skocpol 1995:246-247). Moreover, the party was unsuccessful in developing strong ties with the unions (see Piven 1995:111). The Republicans on the other hand managed to build a new coalition by 1980 consisting of a regional component (the West and South West), a religious/moral component and an economic/ideological component that appealed to the middle class (McKay 1993:82). The business groups and business money moved into the Republican party and electoral politics in the 1970s when it finally overcame its fractured interest group politics (Piven 1995:111-112). Supported by the business community, the Reagan administration lowered taxes on business and on the better-off, accelerated deregulation and cut welfare state programmes (1991:261). Targeted public assistance programmes for low income people that account for less than 18 per cent of federal social spending were mainly attacked by the first Reagan administration (Skocpol 1995:266)[lii]. By changing laws and administration of unemployment insurance at both the federal and state levels, the Reagan and Bush administrations managed to reduce the number of people receiving unemployment benefits (Mishel and Berstein 1993:225)[liii]. Moreover, the real value of the minimum wage fell considerably during the 1980s as it was frozen by the Reagan administrations from 1981 to 1989 (see Karger and Stoesz in Stoesz and Karger 1992:122)[liv]. The unions suffered during the anti-labour policies of the Reagan administra-

tions and the share of the workforce represented by unions contracted more rapidly in the 1980s than in the previous several decades (Mishel and Berstein 1993:187)[lv]. As a result of lower unionisation and growth in service jobs, fewer workers were covered by health insurance and pension plans in the late 1980s than in the late 1970s[lvi]. The anti-labour policies led to growing polarisation of the American Society in the 1980s that contributed to the success of the Democrats under the leadership of Clinton in appealing to the old New Deal coalition consisting of workers, minorities, women and many middle class voters (see Piven 1991:258; McKay 1993:83). After president Clinton assumed office in January 1993, his administration started to rework America's social and economic policies. However, budgetary constraints imposed by the huge budget deficits of the Reagan and Bush administrations have prevented the full implementation of the administration's plans to promote job training and welfare reform (see Skocpol 1995:4). Within the Republican party, the New Right has been intensifying its attempts to move the party to the right threatening the coalition of the early 1980s (see Karger in Stoesz and Karger 1992:28).

Women in professional and managerial positions benefited from greater job opportunities during the 1980s while the mass of women workers in clerical, service, social services and blue collar employment experienced economic hardship due to falling real wages, lack of health, pension and unemployment coverage (see Power 1988:158-159; Mishel and Berstein 1993:211). For these women, the American state, especially the federal government lead by the Democratic party is a potential source of improvements as concerns health and child care provisions (see Ginsburg 1992:119). Moreover, the Democrats have introduced 12 weeks of unpaid family leave at the federal level. Women living in poverty and on welfare on the other hand have a more ambiguous view of the American state as the federal states have violated their right to self-determination and increasingly intruded into their privacy. Many states allow, e.g. involuntary sterilisation of women alleged to be 'socially inadequate' and Medicaid covers now 90 per cent of the cost of voluntary sterilisation. It has been estimated that in 1982, 41 per cent of native American women had been sterilised. Black and other minority women have increased their resistance to sterilisation abuse by forcing federal government and local authorities to regulate the operation and to develop informed consent (1992:123-124). Moreover, the Reagan administrations implemented the so-called 'New Federalism' that gave greater responsibility for welfare policy to the states but there had been a tendency to by-pass the states and transfer money directly to

local governments during the Great Society period because the states had for a long time been considered to be 'regressive' participants in the social reform process (Thompson and Norris 1995:6; McKay 1993:69). The federal states used this opportunity to decrease their responsibilities for welfare recipients as their economies were declining, tax revenues were down and the number of welfare recipients was rising in many states. Hence, the use of waivers permitting experiments outside the bounds of federal statutes and regulations accelerated during the 1980s. As a result, the emphasis of welfare policies changed once again during the 1990s from a more non-intrusive provision of income support towards assistance conditioned upon behaviour such as work for welfare or workfare (Thompson and Norris 1995:5-6)[lvii]. The incentive structure for recipients was changed by either increasing a benefit if a recipient behaved in an approved fashion or punishing recipients who behaved in an unacceptable way. Hence, the federal states intensified their intrusion into affairs of families on welfare who in most cases are female headed families. Experiments like the requirement that children of families on welfare attend school a certain percentage of time (learnfare) and the creation of an incentive for mothers on welfare to marry (bridefare) were introduced in many states. Moreover, additional payments for children born while the family is on welfare (Family Cap) were in some cases ended (1995:7; Corbett 1995:28).

Conclusion

The female suffrage did not enable women in most West European and North American countries to exercise any dramatic political and policy impact as social blocks at the political level were only open for social identities involving class, religion, regionalism and nationalism. From the 1960s until the 1980s, women moblised in mass numbers around the social identity of gender that cut across more established identities such as that of class. The women's movements were a part of the 'new' social movements organising around race/ethnicity, gender and generational divisions that challenged the governing social blocks. In Sweden and the United States, women's greater political mobilisation and labour market participation was followed by an erosion of the breadwinner wages for which unions had struggled during the early part of this century. This development disrupted in most cases the power base of the unions. In West Germany the breadwinner wages still remain the norm and women's labour force participation lagged behind the other two countries until the 1980s when the gap started to narrow.

The women's movements in Sweden, Germany and the United States became more decentralised during the 1980s and early 1990s. The disintegration of the dominant social blocks and more generalised identification with feminism across social groups contributed to the decentralisation (see Katzenstein 1990:32). Moreover, the societal changes that have taken place during this period have intensified divisions among women along class, religious, race and generational lines. These divisions have forced the women's movements to become more aware of the different forms of regulation including the state, the labour market, the family, associations and social movements. Depending on the alliances, compromises and patterns of domination among social groups, certain groups of women may experience greater exclusion from resources than other groups of women. Young women with children have, e.g. been harder hit by the welfare state retrenchment than older working women who have benefited from the tax cuts. It is not yet certain whether the women's movements will overcome these divisions and act as a collective entity since a stable system of social blocks has not been built in, e.g. Sweden, Germany and the United States. However, intensified divisions among women along class lines may induce many women to identify to greater extent with class interests that are sensitive to gender dimensions. The growing inequality that can be attributed to the shift of power from labour to capital may induce a new collective action involving alliance between men and women along class lines pursuing collective rights rather than individual rights.

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Notes:

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i. As pointed out by Regini (1995), the reason for the neglect of the role of

social and political institutions in the functioning of or in the dysfunctioning of the economic system lies in the sharp division of scientific workbetween, e.g. economics, sociology and political science. The stringent division of work has created disincentives to engage in interdisciplinary studies as one runs the risk of being marginalised within the scientific communities.

ii. The People's Home is a metaphor created by the former Social Democratic leader Per Albin Hansson to describe the social democratic project. It drew a parallel between vision of the Social Democrats concerning the future and the 'good home' where relations are characterised by equality, consideration and co-operation (Jenson and Mahon 1993:77).

iii. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) which reads 'Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex' has been before Congress since 1923. Congress voted in 1972 for the amendment by large majorities and 25 states voted for it within a year. However, the amendment ran into troubled when some state legislators began to fear that its implementations might require women to take up combat positions in battle. Hence, the amendment died three short of formal ratification and during he 1980s it failed to win the endorsement of President Reagan (McKay 1993:53-54).

iv. These five parties are the Left party (Vänsterpartiet), the Social Democratic party (Socialdemokratiska Arbetarpartiet), the Liberal party (Folkpartiet), the Center party (Centerpartiet) and the Conservative party (Moderata Samlingpartiet).

v. The Left party has not had a separate women's organisation as women's interests have been regarded to be inextricable from other interests (Elman 1995:253).

vi. The class compromise in 1938 involved an agreement between LO and the SAF that both parties would conduct centralised collective negotiations without the government intervention. Moreover, the LO agreed to recognise the 'management right to manage' (Regini 1995:38; Standing 1988:2).

vii. The LO and SAP have had an overlapping leadership and collective membership of most rank-and-file-union members in the party (Hancock 1993:414). Moreover, the TCO (Tjänstemannens Centralorganisation) that represents primarily white-collar workers in the public and private sectors has operated closely with LO and has therefore been more inclined to support policy initiatives made by the SAP than the bourgeois parties (1993:421-423).

viii. The Social Democratic Women's League made it clear at the party congress in 1928 that they did not want to be invited into the Peoples Home after its completion (Jenson and Mahon 1993:82).

ix. The penalty for abortion was changed in 1926 from imprisonment in

high security prisons to imprisonment in low security prisons. Moreover, abortion was decriminalised by 1927 for cases in which women's life would be seriously endangered if she carried out the pregnancy (Kaplan 1992:106).

x. The German constitution made the parties quasi-state institutions by assigning them fundamental responsibility for 'shaping the political will of the people'. This provision has been used to justify the extensive public financing of the parties. In addition, the parties have been able to ensure that the local state and national post-war bureaucracies were staffed, at least at the upper levels, by their supports (Conradt 1993:233).

xi. Small but important interest groups are the public servants (Beamte) and the farmers. Public servants receive a contract on appointment that specifies lifetime tenure and they enjoy guaranteed salary levels as well as generous non-contributory pension rights (Smith 1994:281-283). Farmers are the most protected and subsidised occupational groups in spite of their small size (around 5 per cent of the workforce) and limited contribution to the GNP (less than 3 per cent) (Conradt 1993:248).

xii. Instead of powerful central organisation, the trade unions were organised on an industrial basis such that each industry has its own trade union that bargains with the relevant employers' association (Smith 1994:14 and 276). Seventeen industrial unions make up the DGB and the most influential represents the metal workers (IG Metall). Freeman and Clasen argue that the unions are weak in the German industrial relation system reflected by the low unionisation, restrictive strike legislation and exclusion from the workplace in favour of the works councils (1994:7-9).

xiii. Most Germans are 'born' into either the Roman Catholic or the Evangelical Protestant (Lutheran) church. Protestants and Catholics have been divided along regional lines. The churches have a close dependent relationship with the state as they are largely financed through a church tax (Conradt 1993:202-203).

xiv. The CDU was the main governmental party from 1949 to 1969 and has remained in power since 1982. The SPD on the other hand was the main governmental party from 1969 to 1982. The SPD and CDU ruled together in what has been called the Grand Coalition formed in 1969. Both the CDU and SPD have preferred to build a coalition with the FDP rather than to form a Grand Coalition with the other party.. Between 1969 and 1982, the FDP was in coalition with the SPD. The FDP changed partners again in 1982 when it turned again to the Christian Democrats (Conradt 1993:222 and 239).

xv. Protective legislation for women was passed in order to curtail exploitative work conditions so that women could carry out more

effectively their roles as wives and mothers in the home (McDonagh 1990:53).

xvi. The laws on mothers' pension were passed in 40 states from 1911 to 1920. The mothers' pensions were locally administered benefits intended to enable respectable impoverished widows and in some cases other categories of mothers or parents to care for children at home instead of being force to surrendering children to the custody of institutions or foster homes (Skocpol 1995:74 and 76).

xvii. The Women's Bureau WB was placed in the Department of Labour. According to Stetson, the WB was the catalyst that enabled the compromises on the 1963 Equal Pay Act. Moreover, WB provided the resources to the state commissions and created the space for the nucleus of the organised women's rights movement of the 1960s (1995:256).

xviii. The alliance with the rural south was not an alliance with the family farmers as in the Scandinavian labour parties but with a quasi-feudal political formation. The southern system was protected from electoral challenges from below by the disenfranchising arrangements of the late 19th century that excluded poor whites and blacks from the electorate (Piven 1991:246-247).

xix. After president Roosevelt put his support behind the legislation, the unions broke with their traditional policy of abstaining from national politics and joined forces with the Democratic party (Piven 1991:246). At the end of the World War Two, one-third of the workforce was unionised but it soon started to decline and it was around 16 per cent in 1989 (Piven 1991:249). Ethnic and racial divisions in the United States have in many instances constrained unions' possibilities of engage in class politics (see Skocpol 1995:103).

xx. Corporations have enormous influence at the state and local level and are therefore able to affect land, taxation, labour and public work policies (McKay 1993:231).

xxi. The American Federation of Labour (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organisation (CIO) combined their forces in 1955 and have lobbied hard in Washington on whole range of public polices which affected worker and working conditions, union rights, social security, job training, vocational education, occupational health and safety, overseas trade relations and economic policy generally. Through its political organisation Committee on Political Education (COPE), AFL/CIO have become one of the most coherent and visible of the Washington lobbies. However, the union structures are highly decentralised and local and state units are often responsible for bargaining over wages and salaries (McKay 1993:234-235).

xxii. The unions and employer's organisations are represented on

commissions of inquire into new policy proposals, consulted on proposed legislation before it goes to the Riksdag (the remiss procedure) and given entry to the Riksdag committees as well as being represented on the governing bodies of major executive agencies such as the Labour Market Board (AMS). After the voluntary withdrawal of business representatives in 1992, union representatives were expelled by the conservative government from most commissions, committees and agencies (Compston 1995:101-102).

xxiii. The SAP has been in government either alone or in formal or informal coalitions since 1932 except for the period 1976-1982 and the period 1991-1994 (see Hancock 1993:425-426). The Swedish constitutionalism makes the formation of a minority government possible in the absence of a majority by a single party or coalition of parties as a prime minister can be elected if not more than half of the parliamentary members vote against him (1993:398-406).

xxiv. The Bundesrat very seldom initiates legislative proposals and it concentrates on the administrative aspects of policy making. West Germany did not experience a form of divided government until 1970s when the Bundesrat started to oppose more often than in the past to government legislation but most legislation on major issues are subject to mandatory approval on the part of the Bundesrat (Conradt 1993:218; Schmidt 1995:11).

xxv. Most federal spending goes to defence and social security transfer payments, most state spending is taken up by salary payments for staff in education and the police and a great part of local government spending involves public investment in health care, welfare, education and sewage and roads (Freeman and Clasen 1994:2-3).

xxvi. A system of tax redistribution or revenue sharing is used to make up for differences between resources and expenditures (Conradt 1993:271). However, considerable regional disparity has existed in the West due to the unequal size of the federal state and uneven development (Smith 1994:38 and 41).

xxvii. While the local, Land and federal authorities are responsible for ensuring that social service needs are met, they do so by supporting and promoting voluntary organisations . The more than sixty thousand freie Träger (free bearers) of social services are grouped into six associations: the Protestant, the Catholic, the union-sponsored, the Red Cross, the German Jewish community and a federation of small agencies (Freeman and Clasen 1994:11-12).

xxviii. In order to engage in successful policy making, an approval is needed from the main interest groups, extra parliamentary organisations of the governing parties, key members of parliament, the states, the courts, semi-public institutions such as the

Bundesbank, the leadership of the health and social security system, the Federal Labour Institute administration and even the opposition parties through their chairmanship of various parliamentary committees and their representatives in the Bundesrat (see Conradt 1993:260).

xxix. Legislative changes of the German constitution require two-thirds majority in the Bundestag and in the Bundesrat. Two-thirds majority requires in practice the formation of an oversized coalition or an all-inclusive coalition in general and co-operation between the major governing party and the major opposition party (Schmidt 1995:11).

xxx. The responsibilities of the federal government are defence and foreign affairs together with some aspects of financial management. Domestic policies such as education, roads, welfare, the administration of justice are allocated to state and local governments (McKay 1993:62).

xxxi. This flexibility can be summarised into three patterns. First, the federal law may set minimum standards and permit states to enact higher standards within their own boundaries. Secondly, The Congress may implement pre-emption of an entire field of regulation. Thirdly, the federal regulatory system may leave opportunities for states to adjust the system in some fashion (Tarullo 1992:103-105).

xxxii. Congress has a power to appropriate money, to raise armies and to regulate interstate commerce as well as the right to declare wars and to ratify treaties. The Senate is empowered to ratify treaties, approve appointments by the president to the judiciary and executive branch and the House can accuse executive officers for wrong-doing. Representatives are elected every two years and senators every six but with one third elected every two years (McKay 1993:132 and 134).

xxxiii. Moreover, the president is commander in chief of the armed forces, chief diplomat, chief recruiting officer to the executive and courts and legislator (McKay 1993:175).

xxxiv. Women on welfare have increasingly been assisted since 1988 to combine motherhood and work. However, those women able to find work do not necessarily earn enough to become economically self-sufficient (Stoesz in Stoesz and Karger 1992:64).

xxxv. According to a survey that was done in the early 1950s for the Social Democratic Women's League, over 60 per cent of housewives were dissatisfied with their lives whereas working women in general express satisfaction (G. Karlsson 1990 quoted in Jenson and Mahon 1993:84).

xxxvi. Information concerning men's and women's party voting is only

available after the election in 1956 when the proportion of women voting for the social block was higher than the proportion of men. At the same time, men were more likely to support the bourgeois block. This pattern turned around after the election in 1960 and remained unchanged until 1979 (Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:76-77).

xxxvii. SACO (Sveriges Akademikers Centralorgansation) is the Confederation of Academics in Sweden.

xxxviii. The Environmentalist party has always had high proportion of female representatives or 45 per cent in 1988 and 44 per cent in 1994 (Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:101 and 157; Statistics Sweden 1995:72).

xxxix. In 1994, 89.0 per cent of women voted while 87.6 of men voted (Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:53).

xl. The term gender gap was first used after the presidential elections in the United States when Ronald Reagan was supported by significantly more men than women. In Sweden, the bourgeois block had a male surplus of 5 per cent in 1985 and it went up to 6 per cent in 1988. The socialist block on the other hand had a female surplus of 4 per cent in the elections 1985 and 1988. (Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:76-79).

xli. The support for the SAP has fluctuated between a high of 50.1 per cent in 1968 to 37.6 per cent in 1991. The party received 45 per cent of the votes in 1994 (Hancock 1993:411-425; Nordic Statistical Secretariat (ed.) 1995:378).

xlii. The fertility rate peaked in 1965 when it was 2.5 and it was not until 1983 that the fall in the fertility rate halted. In 1989, the fertility rate had risen to 2.0 (Gustafsson 1991:510).

xliii. The gender gap in party voting in 1994 was greatest among the age group 18 to 25 years. In this age group, the Left party and the Environmental party were twice as strong among women as. The Conservative party on the other hand was tree times as strong among men than women, a trend that started in 1979 (see Oskarson and Wängnerud 1995:78-79).

xliv. The gender difference or the female surplus of the CDU/CSU went from 8 to 10 per cent from 1953 to 1969. Men on the other hand voted were more likely to vote for the SPD and the gender difference or the male surplus was between 5 and 8 per cent (Molitor 1991:24-27).

xlv. In 1991, female labour force participation in West Germany was 58 per cent while it was 82 per cent in Sweden and 70 per cent in the Unites States (OECD 1994:463-489).

xlvi. Since the elections in 1983, the CDU/CSU has once again had a greater number of women among its electorates. However, the female surplus was only on average 2,3 per cent from 1983 to 1990 while it was 9,2 per cent from 1953 to 1969. The SPD's female-deficit increased again in 1987 and 1990 when it was 0,7 and 0,5 per cent respectively. As concerns other parties, the FDP has had on average around 1 per cent female deficit of women among its electorates. More men than women voted for the Green party until 1990. However, the difference was relatively small or around 1 per cent. In 1990, there was a very small 'female-surplus' in the votes for the Greens. Although the difference between men's and women's voting was small, other parties had a male surplus (Molitor 1991:25-32; Statistisches Bundesamt 1994:99). East German women's choice of parties was not significant different from that of East German men in the elections taken place during 1990 (Molitor 1991:190).

xlvii. The AFDC was first designed to provide relief for impoverished children and from 1950 for their caretakers in families in which one parent is absent, disabled or deceased (Miller 1983 quoted in Sapiro 1986:128).

xlviii. Medicaid is a non-contributory national health scheme for the poor (McKay 1993:68).

xlix. The Supreme Court has declared that states may withhold public funding for abortions including those that are medically necessary. Feminists interpret this as being inconsistent with the logic of protecting women's individual rights as the rights of poor women are not protected (see Sapiro 1986:128).

l. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination against pregnancy in employment and requires those employers who have disability policies to include pregnancy (Stetson 1995:264).

li. In 1984, around 90 per cent of Blacks voted Democratic and in 1992, this number had fallen to 82 per cent (McKay 1993:126).

lii. The administration of conservative president Reagan had to postpone all plans in the early 1980s to cut Social Security when it discovered the widespread bipartisan popularity of the program and was confronted with the political opposition of the organised elderly constituencies (Skocpol 1995:3; Karger in Stoesz and Karger 1992:30).

liii. In 1991, only about 40 per cent of the unemployed received unemployment benefits as opposed to 67 per cent in 1976 (Mishel and Berstein 1993:225). Moreover, there is no means-tested assistance for the long term unemployed who have exhausted entitlement to unemployment benefit or for those not covered at all

(Ginsburg 1992:110).

liv. The legislated increase in 1990 and 1991 raised the minimum wage but it still did not achieve 1979 level. Minorities and women are disproportionately represented among minimum wage workers (Mishel and Berstein 1993:195-197).

lv. In just two decades, the membership of American unions has fallen from about thirty-five million to fifteen million (Piven 1995:111). Except for college educated white women, women were in 1989 less likely than white men to be unionised and black men and black women were in most instances more likely to be unionised than white men and women (Mishel and Berstein 1993:191-193).

lvi. In 1979, 68,5 per cent of the labour force was covered by health insurance and the coverage had dropped to 61,1 per cent in 1989. The greatest loss of health insurance was among men, Hispanics and workers with less than a college degree. The percentage of the private workforce covered by a pension plan dropped from 50 per cent in 1979 to 42,9 in 1989. Lower pension coverage has basically occurred among men. Women are still less likely than men to be covered by an employer's pension plan (Mishel and Berstein 1993:10 and 155-157).

lvii. During the 1970s, the emphasis concerning welfare shifted away from service strategies (addressing individual and family problems) to eliminate poverty towards a simple non-intrusive provision of income supports in the form of negative income tax in order to decrease poverty (Thompson and Norris 1995:5; Corbett 1995:27-28).

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